SD
11
.R1

Northern Region WESTWIDE IN PRINT

R-1 Misc

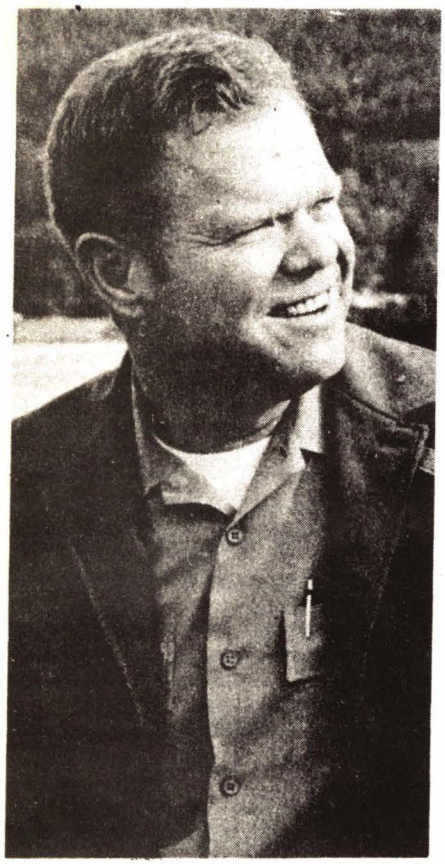
No. 4 September 12, 1972

Missoula, Montana

The Sunday Missoulian, July 23, 1972—19

Flathead National Forest:

Quality Management With Enthusiasm



ED CORPE

LIBRARY COPY
ROCKY MTN. FOREST & RANGE
EXPERIMENT STATION

(EDITOR'S NOTE—This is the first in a series of articles concerning efforts by the U. S. Forest Service to implement a special quality management program on the Flathead National Forest.)

By DALE A. BURK
Missoulian State Editor

KALISPELL—The staff of the Flathead National Forest continues pursuance of a special quality management program "with enthusiasm because it is working" in spite of reports of mounting behind-the-scenes pressure from industry that it abandon the program.

Calling the most recent development in the Flathead "an overt industry ply to undermine the quality management program being tried on the Flathead Forest," Dr. Loren Kreck, a Columbia Falls conservationist, charged that statements to the effect that he and other Flathead Valley conservationists had a hand in appointing a special eight-man study panel to come to the Flathead were "absolutely false."

Kreck was referring to an eight-member panel appointed by a subcommittee of the Kalispell Chamber of Commerce "to study and report to us by or about Oct. 1 on the scientific and technical basis for the proposed new allowable cut."

Gene McGill, chairman of the Kalispell Chamber's Timber Resources Coordinating Committee, announced this week that the committee had established a 16-member subcommittee, which had arranged for the study team to come into the Flathead. Kreck is listed as a member of the subcommittee.

"It's news to me that we helped choose the study panel," Kreck said. "The fact is that it is an industry-sponsored panel, selected by industry and from what I can tell, paid for by industry. We had no voice whatsoever in choosing the members of the study panel, even though our name was lent to it."

Kreck said that from what he has been able to find out since learning of the study panel's appointment, the one-week field study is to cost between $20,000 to $30,000. He said he understood the panel members were to be paid $125 per day plus expenses.

According to the statement issued by McGill in announcing the panel's appointment, "special knowledge is needed to understand the environmental considerations used by the Forest Service as a basis for proposing revisions for allowable cuts and planning timber sales."

McGill said the "panel of experts" would meet with Flathead Forest officials next Tuesday, a fact confirmed by Forest Supervisor Edsel Corpe. Corpe said, however, that he had not yet heard from any member of the panel itself and in fact had not received an official letter requesting him and his staff to meet with the group.

The panel is to be headed by Dr. Robert Dils, dean of the College of Forestry at Colorado State University. Dils is said to be a watershed specialist.

Other members are Donald L. Brown, director of the Montana Fish and Game Department; Dr. William McManus, geologist at Montana State University; Dr. Stanley Gessel, soil scientist at the College of Forest Resources, University of Washington; Dr. Henry Caulfield, political scientist at Colorado State University; Dr. George W. Brown, forest hydrologist at the College of Forestry, Oregon State University; Dr. Lawrence S. Davis, Forest Science Department head, College of Natural Resources, Utah State University and Dr. Carl A. Newport, a consulting forester with the firm of Mason, Bruce and Girard, consulting foresters, in Portland, Ore. Newport reportedly worked on the staff of the Flathead National Forest when the allowable cut figures being revised were made.

In the Flathead, the group will reportedly work with the special Chamber of Commerce subcommittee, which McGill said will be called the Flathead Forest Land Resource Coordinating Committee.

He said the chairman of the local group is Harold McLaughlin. Other members are Dr. Larry Blake, Ray Gardner, Clifford Haines, Wayne Herman, Dr. Kreck, Robert Muth, Tom Hay, Louie Phillips, Lois Fuller, Larry Thomas, F. H. Boles, Royce Satterlee and Hollister A. Larson.

Kreck said Friday that although he did not like the fact that some members of the committee had "secretly arranged for the panel study and then used our name to make it appear to be a legitimate citizen panel," he was going to give the panel the opportunity to make its study.

"Maybe some good will come of it," Kreck said, "and my assessment at the present is to keep hands off and wait to see exactly how objective they will be in assessing quality management on the Flathead."

Meanwhile, the Flathead Forest staff told The Missoulian Friday it was ready to work with the study panel "in whatever manner they want because any input is helpful."

Corpe said he had asked his staff and rangers to update information on a variety of studies and management programs under way on the forest.

"We're anxious to have the examination of our present management direction," Corpe said. "We look forward to having the panel here with enthusiasm because it (the new management program) is working."

Central to the issue is the reduction in timber harvest on the Flathead brought about by increased concern for environmental quality and balanced resource management considerations under the Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act of 1960 and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1970.

McGill raised the subject of economic concern in his letter to Regional Forester Steve Yurich about formation of the study panel.

"You are already aware of the work done by our committee which was established in the Flathead Valley due to citizen concern over the impending reduction of timber available for harvest from the Flathead National Forest," McGill said.

McGill said the committee had concerned itself with the expected social and economic costs of such a reduction.

"It has also probed into the underlying reasons given by the Forest Service for these reductions," McGill wrote. "We have learned that increased concern for the forest environment is a primary contributing factor to the reduced timber harvests."

Conservationists contend that the timber cut on the Flathead Forest was, in past year, too high in regard to the sustained yield concept as required under the Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act and that timber harvesting had improper priority on the forest over related values such as water, soil, wildlife, recreation and esthetics.

Industry representatives disagree, however, and cite the Forest Service's 1969 timber management plan which they say indicated the allowable cut on the Flathead should be 250 million board feet annually.

Forest Service officials are quick to point out, however, that the 250 million board feet figure was based "on optimization of the timber resource and assumed investments in intensive management that never took place because of inadequate funding."

A controlled burn on the North Fork Drainage eliminates piles of accumulated slash left after logging. This burn is in the Glacier View District.

Road crews work placing logs in a bog on Puzzle Creek. The logs will add substance to the soil and hopefully build a base upon which logging trucks can cross.

Additionally, changes in management required by new laws and new and more accurate resource information required the agency to revise downward its earlier estimates of the timber base in the Flathead National Forest.

According to information provided by the Flathead Forest in April, the annual allowable cut in the Flathead Forest will go from 181.6 million board feet under the adjusted 1969 timber management plan to 128.6 million board feet under 1972 calculations.

They said the major reason for the difference is 31.2 million board feet of timber in marginal areas requiring special logging techniques not available at present and which cannot be logged until technology is designed that will protect other associated resource values such as water and soils.

The Flathead Forest said revision of the 1969 timber management plan was necessary "because of changes in areas where timber can be harvested and new legislation such as the Environmental Policy Act of 1970, as well as our intention to give full consideration to all resources and values."

"The 1969 plan was designed to make maximum use of the forest's timber resource on a sustained yield basis," the Flathead Forest statement said. "At the time the plan was prepared, allowance for changes which have become effective since its adoption were not considered."

The forest is now using a process called "Resource Allocation Method" to evaluate needed adjustments in its annual harvest.

"This computer method is a means of evaluating alternatives in timber management planning and makes allowances for changes," the Forest Service stated. "The results of this system have been tested and found reliable for timber management planning and other resource planning."

Corpe said the revised timber management plan is presently undergoing further study before formal implementation.

Meanwhile, he announced that during fiscal year 1972 the forest sold 131.6 million board feet of timber. The sale program for fiscal year 1973 has been set at 119 million.

Photos by Dale Burk

A road leads through a clear-cut section of a logging operation on the North Fork Drainage. Note remaining slash which will later be burned under controlled conditions by Forest Service crews.

Emphasis Shifts on Flathead Forest

(EDITOR'S NOTE — This is the second in a series of articles concerning efforts by the U.S. Forest Service to implement a special quality management program on the Flathead National Forest.)

By DALE A. BURK
Missoulian State Editor

KALISPELL — Things have changed on the Flathead National Forest and the first person to say so is Forest Supervisor Edsel L. Corpe.

"There's been a big shift in emphasis," Corpe said. "Before the allowable cut and production were the big pressures. Now there is no internal pressure to get the cut out if we don't have the staff. Doing a quality job means giving full consideration to all values."

Corpe, who became supervisor on the Flathead in June last year, frankly admits that management direction change throughout the Forest Service was long wanted by many within the agency itself.

"Many of the things we are now required to do are things we wanted to do when I was on the Lolo," Corpe said. "We knew what we wanted, but didn't know how to get it done."

Corpe served as deputy forest supervisor on the Lolo National Forest from 1966-68, which was followed by a three-year tour of duty in Southeast Asia under the Agency for International Development program. He says that upon his return to the United States last year he was surprised at the public awareness of environmental problems.

"The changes in the system have come as a shock to me because I was out of the country for such a long time," Corpe said. "I never thought I'd live to hear a timber staff officer shouting about too much clearcut, but at our first staff meeting I heard John Ulrich do just that when we were setting up our coordinating requirements."

According to Corpe, speaking up is a trait he has encouraged among the staff on the Flathead Forest.

"There's a new attitude, not only among our people but the public too," Corpe said. "Esprit de corps is pretty darned good, though at first I worried about that. But most of the younger fellows are pretty glad to see the emphasis we're making on total quality management.

To Corpe and his staff, the "total quality management" job they pursue is expressed in the Flathead Forest's new "Forest Multiple Plan" — the first of the Northern Region's 16 forests to have its updated multiple use plan approved.

"The Flathead National Forest Basic Land Management Plan is the multiple use planning document that directs and coordinates local decisions for lands and resources," Corpe said.

He said the plan is comprised of two parts — one an analysis of the Flathead's situation and the other specific management prescriptions by planning areas.

The parts integrate three basic components, Corpe said. They are (1), the ability of the land to produce on a long-term basis; (2), inventory of existing resources and uses, and (3), recognition of people's needs and demands.

"The success of this basic land management plan will be dependent on how well the three components are integrated," Corpe said. "The plan is intended to be long range in design, yet provide for timely changes."

Corpe pointed out that the mission of the Flathead Forest is similar to other forests in the region if one considers broad objectives, but specific problems arise because the forest is unique in many respects.

"Quality water, high quality timber sites, the presence of grizzly bear, timber wolf, and westslope cutthroat, unique scenic values similar to those of adjacent Glacier National Park, wild rivers, large recreation potential, and the presence of both existing classified wilderness and currently roadless areas are the resources and values that are complex and challenging," Corpe said.

He said these factors involve a wide range of management, conservation, preservation, creation, restoration, or improvement alternatives within program direction laid out by the Chief of the Forest Service and the Regional Forester's management direction.

"The Flathead's mission is to recognize these unique situations and manage the forest in such a manner so as to provide for proper balance between economics, quality of the environment, and social well being," Corpe said.

He said that management programs must also consider an appropriate mix of national, regional, state and local interests.

Corpe listed in his multiple use plan six major "thoughts" that he said may be considered as a "land ethic" for the Flathead National Forest. They are:

— Sensitivity to the ecological balance and unity of a drainage or other land unit. Realization that changes in one part of an ecosystem always affect others.

— Understanding that irreversible changes can be detrimental to long-term public interest. The usual one faced is loss of soil — the basic resource. The plan states that the bulldozer is the most widespread agent and that misuse can quickly result in long lasting changes.

— Recognition of intangibles — scenic beauty, solitude, absence of air, water or noise pollution — is a skill that is necessary and that can be developed through investment of time and effort. The importance of these skills will increase as demands become more intense, the plan states.

— Knowledge that meaningful public involvement in choosing between alternatives in land management is not only good — it's absolutely necessary.

— Producing commodities at a high level is an integral part of quality land management.

— Re-establishing full understanding that multiple use management is the most beneficial and most efficient management concept for forest lands — both public and private, and insure its application as the guiding principle in planning, development, use and overall conservation of the Flathead National Forest.

"At this place in time, it appears that the major part of our land ethic should encompass a management philosophy that will keep the basic forest characteristics of the Flathead intact," Corpe said.

Dave Rittersbacher, a forester heading the multiple use-long range planning activity on the Flathead, said the forest is changing from a project approach to planning on an area basis.

"We've broken the forest down into planning areas and assigned priorities to these planning areas," Rittersbacher said.

Rittersbacher, who was described by a colleague on the Flathead as "the conscience of the forest," said there are five basic considerations on which resource planning begins. They are soils, geology, land form, vegetative types and fauna.

"We use these things to assess land potential," Rittersbacher said. "Those relationships should show various restraints and opportunities to practice land management on the area on a long term basis."

Corpe cited evaluations made on management activities on five widely-separated national forests — the Bitterroot, Monongahela in West Virginia, forests in Wyoming — and throughout the national forest system that showed similarities in past Forest Service practices that he said the agency is striving to correct.

"The important part brought out in all of these evaluations are that conditions on the ground, that is land capabilities, must guide the Forest Service decisions," Corpe said.

He said that along with local input and local considerations for economically dependent communities, there must also be national considerations for the land management decisions on national forests "to achieve optimum balanced use and adequate resource protection."

Corpe said many of the recommendations made as a result of management practice evaluations throughout the national forest system have been endorsed by Regional Forester Steve Yurich and consequently are reflected in the Flathead Forest's official "coordinating requirements."

"I believe this direction is in the interest of the Flathead Valley, as well as nationally, for today as well as the long haul," Corpe said. "It surely is the most responsive direction in view of public needs and desires of any that has been developed during my years with the Forest Service."

(Next — The multi-disciplinary approach to management and multiple use management.)

Flathead National Forest
THE MISSOULIAN Missoula, Montana July 26, 1972

Specialists Hold Key

(EDITOR'S NOTE — This is the third in a series of articles concerning efforts by the U.S. Forest Service to implement a special quality management program on the Flathead National Forest.)

By DALE A. BURK
Missoulian State Editor

KALISPELL — The adage "two heads are better than one" might well explain the management concept being used today on the Flathead National Forest.

Officially labeled a "multidisciplinary approach" to management, it means that the recommendations of many professional people go into the planning and decision-making processes. It is designed to provide a broad base of information on which to make land management decisions.

It basically is a team approach to land management, according to Flathead Forest Supervisor Ed Corpe, and it has brought complete reorganization of the staff as well as the approach to handling resource management problems.

Corpe explained that the basic change on the Flathead is one of employe reorganization to eliminate the previously dominant functional management concept wherein decisions were often made at the staff level in the supervisor's office and then forced upon the district rangers.

"In essence the reorganization is to put more responsibility on rangers and to have less decision-making by the staff in the supervisor's office," Corpe said. "We are removing the functional concept where a strong staff man could dominate management on the entire forest."

Corpe said the new management concept has been operational on the Flathead since July 1971 and that acceptance of the concept through the six districts of the 2,630,000-acre forest has been enthusiastic.

"The rangers are supposed to make the decisions instead of the supervisor's staff and the districts are supposed to establish their own goals," Corpe said. "They call in specialists when they need them and the specialists now make recommendations. Before they could make the decisions."

Corpe said the objective of the program is to achieve over-all quality land management plans.

"What we want is specialist input before the decision is made and not afterwards," Corpe said. "This is a key factor in our reorganization program."

Corpe said the Flathead Forest recently added a geologist to its list of staff specialists, which includes a silviculturist-ecologist, fisheries biologist, soils scientist, hydrologist, landscape architect, fire manager, recreation specialist, timber sales, and a transportation planner, and a program coordinator.

The multidisciplinary team functions as the planning arm of the forest of which it is a part and is intended to represent "the broadest practical mix of interdisciplinary experience" including resources, engineering, land uses, social sciences and economics.

Thus the multidisciplinary team on the forest is ideally conceived as having five to seven permanent members who make regular use of the technical expertise of specialists by disciplines not represented on the planning team.

The new concept is designed to provide:

— Balanced programming with full concern for quality environment.

— The program coordinator will simplify the decision making process.

— Centralize technical services to ranger districts and strengthen resource input data.

— Emphasize decentralization and increase line decision at the district level.

— Long range planning and forecasting will be strengthened, including emphasis on public involvement.

The man whose job it is to make the multidisciplinary team approach go on the Flathead Forest is Dave Minister, program coordinator, and he sees things through optimistic eyes.

"Right now we're working in an atmosphere that we've lost the white hat the Forest Service had," Minister said. "We see our job as doing a good enough job to regain that reputation."

He said that acceptance of the multidisciplinary approach has been good throughout the forest, although some old-timers were skeptical of it.

FLATHEAD FOREST ROAD PROJECT — A bulldozer builds a logging road into a sale area in the Flathead National Forest. The roads are built under the watchful eye of the Forest Service with men and equipment supplied by the logger that has the contract for the timber. The roads are designed by Forest Service engineers. (Photo by Dale Burk)

"There was a little resistance on the forest staff," Minister said. "Some guys stay in old roles and we have to jog them regularly. One of the things some found hardest is the unwillingness of some to change the habit of giving orders and give advice instead."

Minister said the problem of getting employes to "change roles" has been especially difficult on the substaffs on the forest's six districts.

"A lot of the old guard are defensive because the decisions they made were the right decisions at the time they made them and the frame of reference they were in at the time," Minister said, "and some have come around and said there's a new breath of fresh air around the place — so it isn't all one way."

The need for change has been documented in a report by the Flathead Forest's administrative officer, John Destito, who said that a review of the Flathead organization showed that four major criteria "were either deficient or missing in the management structure."

"Problems encountered proved that long-range planning and integration of plans were both inadequate," Destito said. "Also lacking were technical skills relating to other resource values and the ability to cope with the public's requests for inclusion in the decision-making processes of public land management."

He said that a proposal was presented to the agency's regional office to change the Flathead supervisor's office organization to correct these deficiences and simultaneously recognize an organization that dictated outputs for goods and services as well as regional concerns.

Destito said that public concerns over the management of public lands initiated a need for change in federal land management in the latter part of the 1960s.

"Prior to this period, goods and services were paramount in fulfilling the public needs at a minimum of cost," Destito said. "As the goods and services moved closer to meeting public demands, concern moved toward protection of the resources. Concern for environmental quality was first started by the conservationist organizations and later spread to other public factions."

He said that preliminary signals over the changing public climate came from the problems encountered on the Bitterroot National Forest in Montana and the Monongahela National Forest in West Virginia.

Destito said the Flathead Forest's new reorganization and management concept were recently evaluated by a regional office team and that "over all, the report for the Flathead reorganization was favorable."

"It appeared the objectives for reorganization were being implemented and generally the need for change was accepted by forest personnel," Destito said.

He said the new organization concept was tested against such questions as whether or not it frees creativity, considers proper utilization of specialists, operates economically, enables the unit to make changes on a timely basis, considers long-range jobs as well as crisis management, enhances the multiple use process, provides for flexibility, and is consistent with the mission or objectives of the agency.

Another document lists the objectives of the Forest Service as "to integrate socio-economic needs, resource management opportunities and environmental protection within land capabilities and potential in such a combination that optimizes the total worth of the national forest."

Minister said he was "highly optimistic" that the Flathead Forest staff would "come up with the best land management decisions" in the Northern Region.

"Our attitude throughout the forest is that we've got hold of things," Minister said, "and that there's going to be a lot of changes to the good right away."

He said that "as nearly as we can manage," the multidisciplinary approach is on an ecological basis of what the basic resources of soil, water, terrain and land forms will let the agency do without irreparable damage to the resources.

Changing Harvest Methods

THE MISSOULIAN Missoula, Montana July 27, 1972

Change Annual Allowable Cut

(EDITOR'S NOTE — This is the fourth in a series of articles concerning efforts by the U.S. Forest Service to implement a special quality management program on the Flathead National Forest.)

By DALE A. BURK
Missoulian State Editor

KALISPELL — Past practices on the Flathead National Forest that emphasized timber production over other values have necessitated a reduction of the forest's allowable cut, according to Ed Corpe, supervisor of the forest.

"There is going to be less cutting," Corpe said. "We are identifying areas that should never have been let in the first place. We're adjusting, but it is going to be painful."

The Flathead, which under a 1969 timber management plan established 181.6 million feet as its allowable cut, will operate with an established allowable cut of 128 million in 1972 but because of personnel and budget restrictions will be able to put up only 119 million for sale.

"We hope to do the job of protecting the resource and maintaining a good level of commodity production," Corpe said. "The effect on industry won't be favorable to them. We know it is their objective to get the allowable cut increased and for our programs to meet that cut."

However, Corpe said there is no doubt that requirements of the Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act and the National Environmental Policy Act would require a reduction in the forest's cut under present management options.

"The biggest impact is that we can't get an adequate cut set up with the staff we have," Corpe said. "This factor is going to have more impact right away on how much timber we can put up for sale than the over-all reduction of the allowable cut."

Corpe said he believed that if the forest staff does its job properly he believes it can withstand criticism from industry on the reduced cut.

"Sure, it's cheaper to just draw a line around a bunch of timber like they used to do, but we can't do that anymore," Corpe said. "It's really a matter of facing up to the problem."

He said that the Flathead staff will seek a timber management program based on the capacity of the land to produce the harvest under the sustained yield concept.

"There were some mistakes in the old multiple-use areas," Corpe said. "Several districts enlarged their high areas and others indicated marginal lands that they feel can't be safely logged with present harvest methods." He said that generally this involves steep lands that previously were included in the areas available for timber cutting.

Dave Minister, program coordinator on the Flathead Forest, said he sees the reduction in timber harvest as "overdue and necessary."

He said that in the past the allowable cuts on the Flathead were not based "much" on soils and water but simply on the timber inventory and commercial forest land.

He said that the old timber management plan placed some restrictions on some areas like high zones and certain wildlife areas, but that it wasn't thorough or accurate.

"The impact on soils and watersheds were not considered and that was the key thing," Minister said. "Hell, there wasn't even much education before on the subjects. We studied how to grow timber."

SLASH PILES — While Flathead National Forest personnel concentrate on improving the layout of timber sales, much research is also being done on timber harvest methods, including options which would eliminate the burning of slash. Above, piles of slash are covered with plastic to keep them dry until the torch can be applied. Burning the slash creates pollution and forest fire danger, a fact which has prompted studies of alternate slash disposal methods. (Photos by Dale Burk)

PERPLEXING PROBLEM — Two Forest Service staff members view an area being logged in the Flathead National Forest. With new regulations governing timber harvest plans, the Forest Service is placing more emphasis on planning in order to keep environmental damage at a minimum while still harvesting of timber.

WAITING FOR THE TRUCK — A pile of logs waits for loading near a road in the Flathead National Forest. The forest will reduce the annual allowable cut to comply with new federal laws concerning harvest methods. The reduction is necessary because new guidelines call for more careful planning of timber sales which takes more time and manpower. The Forest Service has found itself unable to keep up the production of previous years and still comply with the new regulations.

Minister said that as near as the forest's personnel can manage its multidisciplinary approach is on an ecological basis of what the basic resources of soil, water, terrain and land forms will let it do without irreparable damage to the resources.

"When we got this multidisciplinary team organized, they right quick confirmed most of the fears we had," Mister said. "There are many areas where cutting will have to be deferred until we get the right equipment to handle it."

Minister said the Flathead Forest's "program emphasis" for fiscal year 1972 would be to take care of what they have first. He said that first on the list of program priorities is protection of existing resource values through fire control, hazard reduction, maintenance, protection of other resources such as range, special use, wildlife, soils and water, recreation administration, roads and trails, and sales administration.

Other program priorities include land-use planning, the timber sell program and timber stand improvement and reforestation.

He said that these program priorities and limitations placed upon the agency's capabilities through manpower and funding shortages would mean that some resources and programs would have to be foregone in the next fiscal year.

These include optimizing such forest uses and resources as fishery habitat improvement, watershed restoration, wildlife habitat, endangered species, timber management, recreation, and land-use planning.

Other programs foregone will be conservation education, social programs, pollution abatement of water, air and solid waste, and law enforcement.

Minister said the Flathead Forest's "Coordinating Requirements" pretty well set the tone of management direction on the forest and that almost everybody on the forest staff had a hand in developing these guidelines.

The coordinating requirements are broken down into five categories — general, high area zone, general forest zone, special zones like wilderness and experimental areas, and water and travel influence zones.

The general forest area of 1,019,000 acres or 43 per cent on the Flathead National Forest is generally indicative of the approach to be taken on the Flathead. This portion of the forest is to be managed primarily for timber, forage, water, wildlife and recreation as contrasted to limited management areas (23 per cent of the forest) and classified areas (34 per cent of the forest).

The general forest zone coordinating requirements for determining management policies on the Flathead are:

— Do not clearcut where alternative cutting methods are feasible unless clearcutting must be done to aihieve management objectives set forth in the multiple-use plan.

—Curtail timber sale operations in absence of adequate supervision. Rangers will establish standards of adequacy.

— Until the forest knows more about the effects of roads and timber harvest on high elevation-low timber producing sites, allowable cut adjustments will be made as these areas are identified.

— Timber management activities will include considerations which reflect a concern for visual qualities as well as timber values.

— Return non-system roads, skid trails, and log landings to a near natural state and productive forest site following use.

— Spawning and rearing streams for native westslope cutthroat and Dolly Varden fish will be identified and a protection plan developed where roads and sales are planned.

— Timber sales will be designed in accordance with other values to take advantage of all natural features that would provide fuel breaks for extended periods of time.

— Modify log hauling where necessary to minimize conflict with recreation traffic. Enforce reasonable limits on speed, size, and weight of log trucks and eliminate unnecessary public use on roads under construction.

— Provide increased assistance to state and private landowners in accordance with needs and requests with agency capability.

— Water yield manipulation will only be carried out with the benefit of a high level study and an area prescription.

— Avoid or modify harvesting in drainages involving unacceptable watershed degradation, either existing or anticipated, based on hydrologic analysis.

— Revise timber management plan on basis of known hydrologic and wildlife limitations, as well as changes in the land base and marginal areas.

General coordinating requirements applicable to all zones include guidellines on planning, fish and wildlife, law enforcement, public and employe involvement, transportation, roadless areas, conservation education, environment, recreation, cooperation with county government, and socio-economic factors.

In the Flathead Forest

THE MISSOULIAN Missoula, Mont.

July 29, 1972

'Nothing Under the Carpet'

Mike Thompson, left, and Gary Meyer.

(EDITOR'S NOTE — This is the fifth in a series of articles concerning efforts by the U.S. Forest Service to implement a special quality management program on the Flathead National Forest.)

By DALE A. BURK
Missoulian State Editor

KALISPELL — "Don't pass up anything or shove anything under the carpet in terms of land management problems," Ed Corpe, supervisor of the Flathead National Forest, told the two rangers. "Let it all hang out."

Corpe's admonishment was to Gary F. Meyer, resource assistant on the Tally Lake District of the Flathead Forest, and Mike Thompson, the forest's landscape architect. They were to show agency road construction activity on the Griffin Creek Road in the Tally Lake District northwest of Kalispell.

They were joined at the project site by F. R. "Dick" LaSalle, project engineer for the Forest Service, who explained that the Griffin Creek road involved 13.4 miles of construction to connect Bitterroot Lake with Star Meadows and the Tally Lake road.

The project was under contract to Clark Brothers of Victor for $850,000 with the clearing operations subcontracted to Herman H. West of Murphy, N.C.

Meyer explained that the work they were showing involved only the clearing project and that actual road construction would begin later. LaSalle called the clearing project a "variable clearing" while Meyer said it "is something that's entirely different than regular road clearing."

"In places where special vista potential areas exist the potential is taken advantage of — such as a lake or meadow," Thompson explained. "It gives you more relief from monotony."

LaSalle explained that the road, which will have a 23-foot driving width with most of the slopes laid back, is basically located through lodgepole pine-type forests.

Landscape architect Thompson said that his involvement on this particular road had all come "after the fact" because the road had been planned and the contract let before he came to the forest.

"Hopefully on future jobs we'll be in on the planning before the decision is made and not afterward like on this one," Thompson said. "I feel the landscape architect should have as much to say in management plans as any other specialty."

Thompson said that on the Griffin Creek road project he has only had the opportunity of working with a road design that was already determined when he came into the picture.

"This road would be different, quite different, if it were just being planned," he said.

And yet Thompson said the Flathead Forest staff and the contractor have been receptive to suggestions he has made to improve the road design. Most of his suggestions involve esthetic considerations.

"The contractor on this job has been amazing," Thompson said. "He is aware of the problems we face and has been more than willing to cooperate although he gets paid pretty much the same amount of money."

Meyer said the contract revision to incorporate Thompson's recommendations as a landscape architect has provided double benefits. "There is a lot more control over the contractor and at the same time a lot more cooperation with him," Meyer said.

LaSalle said he belives road construction personnel both within and outside the Forest Service are striving to change to do a better job of road construction without damaging or destroying other resource values.

Since last year the Flathead Forest has been devising a "road ethic" with the effort being spearheaded by James D. Kline, district ranger on the Tally Lake District.

"Much of the criticism that the Forest Service receives concerning the land management job we are doing is related to roads," Kline said at the time. "Furthermore, few land management activities are more irreversible or have more potential for errors that are more damaging than road construction."

Kline said the Forest Service is in a "new era" of public land management.

"What was okay yesterday is not today," he said. "What is good today will be questioned in the future. The best interest of the public are changing rapidly and we must respond."

Kline said he believes the Tally Lake District has to develop, understand and practice a road ethic that is responsive to the technical knowledge and public need present now.

He said the district's road development concept must change.

"Clearly speaking we need to stop cutting timber to build roads and starting building roads to cut timber," Kline said.

He said he realized this cannot be a blanket statement because there is still a need for some basic transportation routes, but that there are many that have good access and need no more through routes. Kline said the Tally Lake District transportation route is "fairly well developed" with few drainages that are without either actual or currently planned access.

"Specifically, road design and construction standards must be based on the needs of the resources and the demands of the public," Kline said. "It must be emphasized that the standards must consider not only the 'key' resource, but all resources to fulfill the requirement for quality land management."

He said that this direction does not dictate specfic dimensions or grades and that road contract would indicate maximum specifications as well as minimum.

"It is not a specification," Kline said. "It allows us all of the latitude our skill and awareness will provide. Consequently, we must develop more stringent controls over survey and construction."

Kline said this direction does not mean "more narrow goat trail," but that he foresees more variation in the standards of the various roads the agency builds — more double land, higher standard designs as well as more minimum standard roads.

"I also see us closing more roads after they have served their purpose," Kline said. "Not obliteration but physical or administrative closures. I see more response to aesthetical requirements. I see us not building roads if we can afford to build them right rather than reducing quality to fit our economic capabilities."

He said he foresees the agency being more restrictive on the periods of the year it will allow road building and the procedures used, as well as more imagination and individuality going into road location and design.

"I don't mean to indicate that we have failed in our road building efforts," Kline said. "To the contrary we have many roads that fit the ethic I wish to establish very well. Unfortunately we have others that don't fit."

He said the direction and ideas he proposes are not new and revolutionary but proven and evolutionary.

"This is an effort to gather the people responsible for quality land management on the district — this leaves no one out — around a common modern approach to our road development needs," Kline said. "It is a start toward catching up and keeping up to the times."

On the entire Flathead Forest, considerable road construction is anticipated in coming years. According to a draft environmental impact statement in regard to the agency's three-year road construction program for the forest, the projected indication is that the forest's transportation system will reach about 8,000 miles of permanent roads. There presently are 2,060 miles of existing forest roads.

According to the same impact statement, current management direction on the forest requires a multidiscipline team approach in planning, construction and management of roads.

"Roads planned and constructed with full consideration for all attendant values will lay lightly on the land," the statement reads. "The result will be a significant reduction in the amount of silt added to streams, a more pleasant traveling experience for forest visitors due to the natural aspect of the road, and fewer restrictions on wildlife movement."

Walter Kasberg, Flathead Forest engineer, outlined the forest's coordinating requirements for the transportation system:

— Base access needs on specific land management purposes.

— Preplan road closures and road use as part of land management process.

— Road plans will include design criteria to provide for options which will result in: 1, a safe, pleasant driving experience; 2, blending the road with the lay of land; 3, meeting land management objectives for the area 4, maintaining water quality; and 5, minimum visual impact.

— Evaluate fully all effects of road construction on rare and endangered species habitat, and calving, rearing areas, or migration routes before approval. Select alternates which minimize negative effects.

— Establish priorities within the areas of maintenance, improvement, operation and construction of transportation facilities as follows: 1, safety; 2, correction of soil-water erosion problems; 3, structural dificiencies; 4, correcting existing objectional visual problems; and 5, new access.

— Specialist (geologist, hydrologist, etc.,) project input will be incorporated at early stages of road design and location.

— Provide design and supervision for timber purchaser-constructed roads adequate to control operations that result in a facility acceptable under the same standards as contractor-built roads. Overbuilding (too wide) roads is unacceptable.

GRIFFIN CREEK ROAD — Timber has been felled and cleared for a road construction project on Griffin Creek in the Tally Lake District of the Flathead National Forest. (Photos by Dale Burk)

6—The Missoulian, Monday, July 31, 1972

Rangers: Under the Gun In Decision Making

(EDITOR'S NOTE—This is the sixth in a series of articles concerning efforts by the U.S. Forest Service to implement a special quality management program on the Flathead National Forest.)

By DALE A. BURK
Missoulian State Editor

BIGFORK—From Crane Mountain south of Bigfork, Bill Pederson could look to the east, west or north and see the marks of large, square-blocked clearcuts on the portion of the Flathead National Forest under his charge.

Pederson, a tall, studious man, is district ranger on the Swan Lake District of the Flathead Forest with headquarters at Bigfork, a post to which he moved after serving as district ranger on the Flathead's Spotted Bear District.

"There is very little of the district that is not viewable from almost any vantage point in this part of the valley," Pederson said.

The Swan Lake District consists of two units, the larger encompassing the Swan Valley from ridgetop to ridgetop north of Van Lake and the other called an "island unit" on the west side of Flathead Lake in the Blacktail and Haskill Mountain area.

"Bill's district is different from the others on the Flathead," Ed Corpe, forest supervisor, said, "but still all our districts are quite similar in some respects. Everywhere you go there are good timber growing sites and high country scenic areas."

Pederson and Corpe were conducting a tour of the Swan Valley portion of Pederson's district to show some of the management program under way.

"We rangers are definitely under the gun now in making decisions," Pederson said. The district ranger now has the responsibility based on recommendations of the staff men. Before a strong staff man could shove through his recommendations."

Pederson said the major problems on his district involved road closures, slash burning, recreational use problems, and timber harvesting.

He said the problem of road closures has been especially troublesome because of difficulty in finding the best way to make a closure and public acceptance of specific closures.

"We know people want some roads closed, but we're not sure how to best do it," Pederson said. "We feel that if we keep the main system road open and close the roads that slab off from it we still provide access to the drainage and leave the area protected."

Slash disposal through burning appears to be a problem of local concern that will be with the district for some time. Numerous citizen complaints have arisen in regard to the smoke that is trapped in the Swan Valley and Bigfork area each fall because of slash burning on the district.

"We keep trying different things like covering some slash so we can burn at different times of the year," Pederson said. He said the problem is further complicated by the fact that the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Burlington Northern and the State Forestry Department also burn in the area.

Corpe said that the emphasis on the forest of shifting to more selective logging and less clearcutting would result in a buildup of fuels in the forest and that this will require burning.

"Locally, we catch a lot of blame for smoke that comes into the valley from outside," Pederson said. "I feel that we can't solve the problem alone on this district because the smoke comes in and settles."

At Woodward Creek on the west side of the Swan Valley, Pederson and Corpe discussed a 6.4 million board feet clearcut sale involving some 349 acres that had been extensively revised.

Equipment strips are being left along the streams, including "anywhere where the small streams had a clearly defined channel.

"They can cut in the strip, but no heavy equipment is permitted inside the strip," Pederson said. "The important thing is that it involves intermittent streams."

The Woodward Creek sale is held by B. D. Wemple of Kalispell and Pederson was quick to praise him for working with district personnel in revising the cut.

"The loggers have been pretty cooperative on most of the things we've wanted to do," Pederson said. "We've got to work with the loggers to come up with a solution that is good for both."

The Woodward Creek sale includes considerable revision from clearcutting to shelterwood type cuts in which some larger trees are left standing.

"Personally, I have to admit that I like this better," Pederson said. "From an aesthetic standpoint I feel we've got quite an accomplishment in the Woodward Creek sale."

Pederson said that shifting from emphasis on clearcutting in the district to other forms of cutting has resulted in additional costs and some delay in putting timber up for sale.

He said that in keeping with Northern Region management direction to clearcut only where there is no other suitable method, the Swan District was going from 64 per cent clearcut in fiscal year 1970 cutting operations to 8 per cent clearcutting in fiscal year 1972. Individual tree marking or species designation cutting accounted for only one per cent of the district cut in 1970, but will be used in 64 per cent of the cut in fiscal year 1972.

"It is costing us approximately $5 per acre additional to individually tree mark," Pederson said.

"In addition on the revised Woodward Creek sale we required the purchaser to skid and deck all the culls, snags and windfalls because it would be impossible to pile them due to the leave trees," Pederson said.

He said the purchaser was allowed $27,000 in the appraisal to do this work.

Pederson said that timbering operations on the district would be restricted by two basic area designations—special treatment areas and deferred status areas.

He listed four basic restrictions on the special treatment areas:

—Logs shall be removed from special treatment areas by cable skidding or winching.

—If the sale contains cutting units outside the special treatment area, skidding equipment shall operate from within those areas designated for cutting but outside the special cutting area.

—Logs shall be cut into lengths of 40 feet or less prior to skidding.

—Trees shall be felled in the direction of skidding to minimize damage to the residual stand and to reduce slash on the area.

"To operate anywhere near the level we should, we are going to have to cut some timber and build some roads in some of the presently unroaded areas," Corpe said.

He said that 28 per cent of the Flathead Forest's 2,355,000 acres, or 671,000 acres, are presently considered roadless but that perhaps one-third of this will ultimately be placed in some sort of roadless designation such as Wilderness Candidate Study Area, or special high zones.

Corpe said he was hopeful of "shaking out" of the present roadless inventory program being conducted nationwide by the Forest Service those areas which will not be included in the Wilderness Candidate Study Area program.

"Roadless lands not included in that program will remain in the general forest zone with all management options open," Corpe said, "but there will be no logging or roading in the areas until they are studied. That doesn't mean they won't be logged at a future date. It just means we will study them first as part of our multiple use planning process."

Special cutting zones have been set up along streams like this one on Woodward Creek in the Swan Lake District. (Photo by Dale Burk)

A thinning project on the Swan Lake District of the Flathead National Forest is shown above. (Photo by Dale Burk)

The Puzzle Of Puzzle Creek

THE MISSOULIAN Missoula, Montana August 5, 1972

(EDITOR'S NOTE—This is the seventh in a series of articles concerning efforts by the U.S. Forest Service to implement a special quality management program on the Flathead National Forest.)

The Hungry Horse District of the Flathead National Forest has three areas which are "representative" of the special problems facing the Forest Service in making sure that the new quality management program is effective. Ranger John Hook discusses with The Missoulian the complexities of dealing with forest management in the varied terrain of the Hungry Horse District.

John Hook, district ranger on the Hungry Horse District. (Photos by Dale Burk)

By DALE A. BURK
Missoulian State Editor

HUNGRY HORSE—District Ranger John Hook of the Hungry Horse District on the Flathead National Forest chose three widely separated areas of his district to view as being "representative" of the management problems and programs on the district.

They are the Puzzle Creek area in the Middle Fork of the Flathead River drainage near the Continental Divide south of Glacier National Park, the "Highway 2-river complex" along the Flathead River between Hungry Horse and West Glacier, and the Lost Johnny Creek drainage on South Fork of the Flathead River.

Hook conducted the tour of the three areas along with John Ulrich and Dale Thacker of the Flathead Forest supervisor's office in Kalispell. Thacker has since left the Flathead Forest.

"The Highway 2 complex is the number two priority among management areas on the Flathead Forest," Hook said, "basically because of the recreational impact in the area."

He said that over the last two years the demands for recreational needs have shown up in the area, basically because of the proximity of the area to Glacier National Park, and the possibility of conflict with timber thinning projects for commercial timber production has arisen.

"We called a halt to our activity in the area until we could assess the situation," Hook said.

He said there is considerable intermingled private lands in the area, three public campgrounds of considerable size, another small one and a fifth proposed at the junction of the South and Middle Forks of the Flathead River.

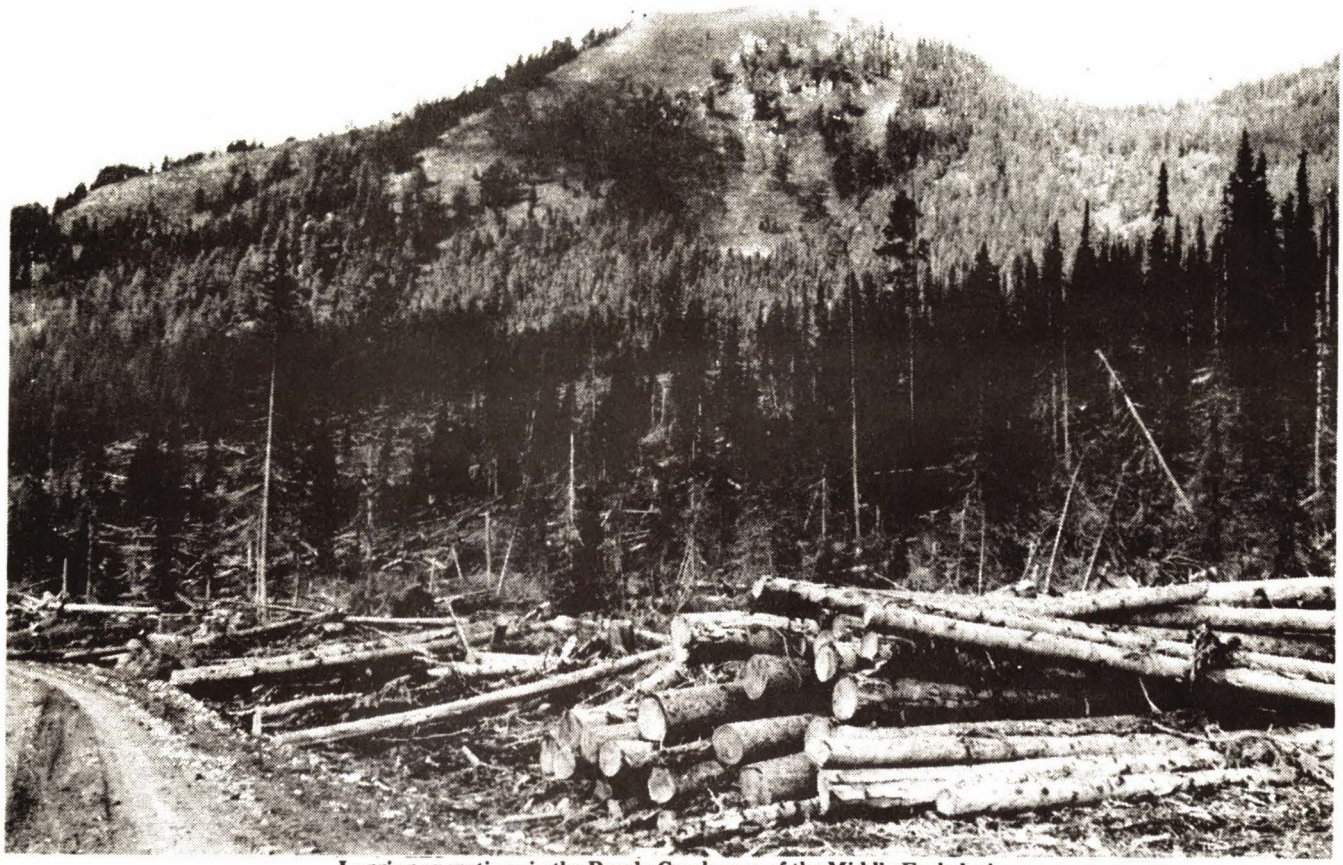
"We see the potential for glutting the market," he said.

Hook said Flathead Forest personnel had had meetings with the Fish and Game Department, National Park Service, and Lewis and Clark and Kootenai national forests to look at a recreational concept for the entire area surrounding Glacier Park.

"We are basically looking at it from the point of view that both the Forest Service and Park Service funds are severely limited and that we can do a more orderly job of development and let private industry develop the campgrounds," Thacker said.

Hook said the concept was not for the public agencies to provide places to stay but rather to do things to facilitate recreation.

"We're just getting started and thus far the cooperation has been good," Hook said.



Logging operations in the Puzzle Creek area of the Middle Fork drainage.

He reported a different situation, however, on the Puzzle Creek area along the Continental Divide south of Glacier National Park where the Forest Service is trying to work with the purchaser to make modifications on a timber sale there.

The sale, for 12 million board feet, was let in 1969 to Stoltze Land and Lumber Co. of Columbia Falls and involved 3,200 acres, 826 of which were to be cut over. Since then the Forest Service has proposed modification of the sale over a larger area but for a recommended cut of 7.2 million.

"The sale is in a fairly high spruce basin in the Middle Fork drainage," Hook said, "and we got to looking at the area ahead of the logging. We found an awful lot of wet logging ground and had hydrologists, soils scientists and transportation experts look the situation over."

Hook said it was found that clearcutting the way it was originally planned was such that the Forest Service "couldn't live with it" and a "risk selective cutting system" was set up primarily because of the water production in the area.

"The hydrologist described the areas as 'one big sponge' and that we would affect the waterflow," Hook said.

He said that Puzzle Creek is one of the main tributaries of Morrison Creek, which in turn is one of the major spawning streams for the dolly varden that migrate to the area to spawn.

Hook said the Forest Service has since drawn up a proposal it believes can be done to log the area safely. He said that instead of having two big clearcuts, the agency has set up a risk cut between the creeks and a higher unit up on the slope.

"On one unit we plan to stay entirely out of the wet boggy land along both sides of the creek," Hook said, "and on another unit we plan to clearcut... He said there are two units in the sale area that have already been clearcut.

The contingencies are, however, dependent upon agreement by the contract holder, with whom satisfactory arrangements to modify the sale must be made.

"We are involved with a contract that has been signed with Stoltze Land and Lumber Co. and the only way we can modify it is for the contractor to give his consent, or go through unilateral action," Hook said. "Right now we are in the process of working out the modifications with Royce Satterlee of Stoltze."

Hook said the agency preferred to solve the problem by mutual agreement to a modification procedure but that negotiations to date with Satterlee had been unsuccessful.

The sale area involves spruce, as the dominent species, whitebark pine, lodgepole pine and subalpine fir.

"The situation is that you've got to look at each situation individually, not just in spruce areas but al wet areas," Hook said.

He suggested that the tour include a walk along a half-mile or so of muddy logging road then under construction and impassable by motor vehicle to the site where construction crews were filling a bog area in the road with logs cut to the road width and stuffed down into the mud with a huge dozer.

The dozer operators said that the soil was "very wet" and that the "fill material was six to eight feet down and we haven't hit bottom."

Hook said this situation was prevalent in the area and confirmed what the agency's hydrologist and soils scientist had advised them of in the area.

"My major concern right now is to get some sales in areas like Puzzle Creek where we have sales in high area zones worked out," Hook said. "My big hope is that I can get on top of things."

Hook, who became ranger on the Hungry Horse District on May 1, 1970, said that revisions of a sale in the Lost Johnny Creek drainage was indicative of the Flathead Forest's shift to quality management.

The sale originally involved 1,131 acres with 358 to be cut off. Some 130 acres were eliminated from the cut following revision.

Hook said the Lost Johnny Creek sale was just under some high area units and after activity got under way in the sale area the Forest Service saw signs of problems involving soil slippage and water quality.

"We took out what was down and what we could get from the road, closed the unit of the sale down and made modifications," Hook said. "Then we barriered the road so it wouldn't wash any more."

He said that Larry Magone, a forester for the contractor, Plum Creek Lumber Co., was "very agreeable to the modification" and praised Magone's cooperation for working with them to protect the soil and water quality.

Elsewhere along the west shore road around Hungry Horse Reservoir upstream from Hungry Horse Dam, Hook said the plan is to remove dead material from along the road.

He said that the assistance of a landscape architect from the Flathead Forest supervisor's office will be utilized to modify the edges of present clearcuts in the area and on all major cutting between the road and the reservoir.

Flathead National Forest:

THE MISSOULIAN Missoula, Montana

SPOTTED BEAR:

August 6, 1972

Facing Up to Past Errors

(EDITOR'S NOTE — This is the eighth in a series of articles concerning efforts by the U.S. Forest Service to implement a special quality management program on the Flathead National Forest.)

By DALE A. BURK
Missoulian State Editor

SPOTTED BEAR — A decade ago the Bunker Creek area of the Flathead National Forest was the site of pitched battle between conservationists and the U.S. Forest Service over agency plans to road and log the area.

That battle was to foreshadow developments in the early 1970s that would question the management direction being taken by the U.S. Forest Service on the nation's 187 million acres of national forest land and ultimately lead to fundamental and far-reaching changes in the agency's approach to land management.

Today, the Bunker Creek drainage is still very much in the eye of those concerned with quality, balanced forest management on public lands — so much so, in fact, that the Bunker Creek-Spotted Bear River complex has been designated as the top management priority area on the Flathead National Forest.

The Flathead was selected approximately two years ago by the Northern Region to implement a special multi-disciplinary team approach to achieve overall quality management and shortly after the program was under way the new district ranger at Bunker Creek involved suggested that basic changes be made in a timber sale involving 31 million board feet of timber in the Bunker Creek drainage.

Rollie Saylor, 35, was appointed district ranger on the Spotted Bear District of the Flathead in late June of 1970. The area under his charge involves forest land in the South Fork of the Flathead River drainage on the south half of the Hungry Horse Reservoir, the controversial drainages of Bunker Creek, Spotted Bear River and Dean Ridge, and a portion of the Bob Marshall Wilderness.

"Just after I came to the district I looked at the plans in the Bunker Creek sale and felt the drainage was being hit too hard," Saylor said, "and we began our modifications."

The original sale involved some 15 cutting units, basically to be clearcut, and Saylor recommended a change in cutting pattern in most units from clearcutting to shelterwood or group reserve cutting. The proposed cut would be for 24.3 million board feet instead of the 31 million sold in the original contract.

"We had to go before the regional forester (Neil Rahm at the time) and the regional division chiefs to present our reasons why the sale should be adjusted," Saylor said. "He said it looked good and we should go ahead with it."

However, it developed that the magnitude of the volume and the money involved in the sale took the decision out of the hands of the Forest Service because it involved modification of a signed and legal contract. The modification took the approval of the Comptroller General of the United States and this didn't come until December of 1970, Saylor said.

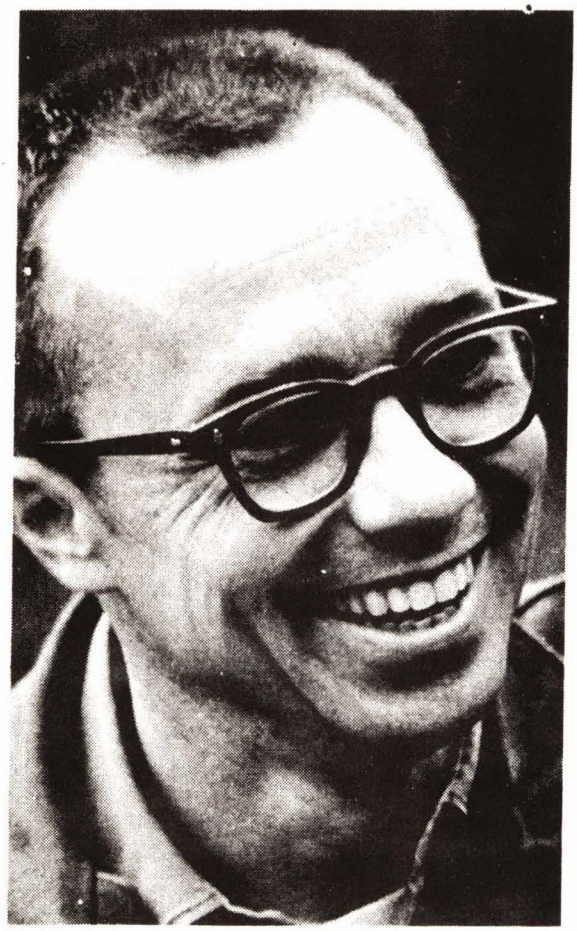
Logging in the sale area had commenced, however, and Saylor said that both the contractor — Plum Creek Lumber Co. of Columbia Falls, a subsidiary of Burlington Northern — and the woods crew cooperated with requests from the Forest Service to log the area in accordance with the proposed modifications.

"Del Mitchell, resource assistant, and I came up and gave a program to the woods crew to explain what we were trying to do," Saylor said. "We've had excellent cooperation."

Saylor said that approval from within Plum Creek to begin logging in accordance with the proposed modifications came from Hollister Larson of Kalispell, president of that firm, and that Larson has been "very cooperative" in working out the modified plans.

Now the modification has received final approval and Saylor and his staff, including Bud Anderberg, administrator of the Bunker Creek sale, believe the successful modification program on the Bunker Creek sale to protect water, soil and wildlife resources will have an impact on modifications of other timber sales where adverse side effects could result from logging.

The original 15 sale units involved 1,585 acres of clearcutting, 203 acres of overstory removal, no shelterwood cutting and no group reserve cutting (a modified clearcut in which groups of trees are left). The modified cut calls for 383 acres to be clearcut, 529 acres of shelterwood cutting, 319 acres of overstory removal and 266 acres of group reserve cutting.



Rollie Saylor

Saylor said that one cutting unit was thrown out of the new cutting program because it involved too much clearcutting. The modification also required enlarging the area to be cut so the timber volume for the purchaser could be maintained.

"Changing the contract alone will affect change in that some of the cutting methods we thought were so hot actually weren't any good," Anderberg said.

He said he considered it "quite a challenge" to administer the Bunker Creek sale because of the publicity the area has had and the impact it would have on other sales on the forest.

"There's no doubt in my mind that we were timber foresters," Saylor said in discussing the emphasis to quality management on the Flathead Forest and the Forest Service in general. "In my past 12 years in the Forest Service I've been pushed to get more timber out."

He said that in the past the story was that the agency didn't have the time to get done with all the things it knew needed doing and the emphasis was on functional programs like timber.

"Even now I wonder how we're going to get everything done," Saylor said. "As a forester I work 16 hours a day almost every day. The management emphasis change is good, but I'm not sure yet that we have adequate time to get the job done. But we keep trying because we signed on to do a job."

Saylor said that under the Flathead's new management program he had reorganized his district staff and had encountered no resistance. He said the enitre staff had a hand in coming up with the district's recommendations for the Flathead Forest's over-all management coordinating requirements.

He said that the Flathead Forest, including his district, had been divided into land units to do multidisciplinary studies so that every discipline on the forest would have a hand in coming up with management decisions.

"The concept is that the district ranger will get the input from all the disciplines before he makes his decision," Saylor said.

He said a study is now being conducted on the Spotted Bear River drainage to determine what the best management approach will be.

"The first step is an inventory of all the resources in the drainage," Saylor said. "We have an extensive inventory but now we're looking at it in more detail and doing an intensive inventory of what's there."

Minister said the only way the multidisciplinary approach can work is to get the area plans done. He said it would probably be 10 years before all the area inventory and management prescriptions are completed on the Flathead Forest.

Saylor said that in the Spotted Bear River drainage itself he is depending heavily on the inventory to facilitate management in the drainage.

"We don't know what we can do in the area until the inventory studies are done," Saylor said. "I can't say what will happen now. Conditions have changed even since the Spotted Bear Road was let."

The Spotted Bear Road is called the "Dean Ridge Road" by conservation groups and was heavily contested at the time its contract was let because it penetrates a roadless area to Dean Ridge said vital to elk migrations in the area.

PROTECTING WILDLIFE — The road into the upper portion of the Bunker Creek drainage is closed to public travel to protect elk, grizzly and mountain goat populations in the area.

Saylor said the road is to be closed to public traffic except for July and August because of the impact on wildlife. However, he said the conditions that have changed since the contract that was let involved a major slide on the $461,237 road that traverses some 7.73 miles into the Spotted Bear River drainage.

Joe Sankovic, Forest Service engineer in charge of the road project, said the slide that occurred had come unexpectedly.

"We assumed the cut would be one of the better cuts on the road," he said. "Geologically, we feel we've cut into the toe of an old slide. We didn't expect the soil to move, but it slid."

Saylor said that slides are common naturally in the area and that one on the Lower Twin Creek drainage near the mouth of the stream was on "quite a fault" and slowly sliding down the mountain and would eventually dam the creek.

Another major problem on the Spotted Bear District is illegal outfitting in the Bob Marshall Wilderness, Saylor said. He said that outfitting is regulated to protect the wilderness resource, but that it was difficult to enforce.

He said that those persons outfitting illegally were doing so at the expense of the legitimate outfitters, who have permits to occupy campsites in the wilderness for outfitting purposes.

Saylor said that protection of both the legal outiftting industry and the wilderness resource would require regulation of illegal outfitters who are actually providing outfitting services but claiming to be private parties.

CONTROVERSIAL ROAD — The Dean Ridge road into the upper Spotted Bear River drainage in the South Fork of the Flathead River area is one of the major management challenges facing the Flathead National Forest. Spotted Bear River flows from the canyon to the right of the photo. (Staff Photo by Dale A. Burk)

NORTH FORK CLEARCUT — Large clearcuts such as this on drainages in the North Fork of the Flathead reportedly caused problems in terms of impact on streams and fish and aquatic life. The area's allowable cut has since been reduced. (Staff Photo by Dale A. Burk)

TREES COMING UP—Sites like this on the Spotted Bear District were shown to indicate that generally regeneration is no problem. This clear-cut was in the Spotted Bear River drainage.

North Fork Water Problems Required Reduced Timber Cut

THE MISSOULIAN Missoula, Montana August 9, 1972

(EDITOR'S NOTE — This is the ninth and last in a series of articles concerning efforts by the U.S. Forest Service to implement a special quality management program on the Flathead National Forest.)

By DALE A. BURK
Missoulian State Editor

COLUMBIA FALLS — Is the Forest Service sincere in its efforts to bring forest management on the Flathead National Forest back into balance with other resource values?

The immediate answer from the Forest Service itself is an unqualified "yes" and in at least one recent case they were asked by the Montana Fish and Game Department to prove it.

Don L. Brown, director of the Fish and Game Department, wrote the Flathead Forest earlier this year expressing concern about Forest Service plans to let additional timber sales in the North Fork of the Flathead area and asked the Forest Service to explain how it was going to protect water and fisheries values in certain drainages.

"We are presently concerned with the number of timber sales in the North Fork that are near or contiguous to former sales," Brown wrote. "The question arises on how sales can be repeated so frequently in the same drainage without severe or irreparable damage to stream habitat and fish life."

Brown said that Canyon Creek is one example where privately owned and U.S. Forest Service lands have been cut so close to the critical acreage that stream damage has already occurred and severe damage could be imminent in a year of high snow pack and fast run-off.

"The years 1968 through 1970 saw extensive cutting on many North Fork tributaries, with questionable quality of planning, administrative errors and incidents of inadequate on-site supervision." Brown said.

He said that slash piles were piled in stream overflow channels, particularly on Red Meadow Creek, and extensive clearcuts were made without adequate precaution against possible damage to the aquatic habitat or fish life.

Brown said the department was concerned that peak discharge volumes and velocities will exceed stream channel capacity and meander frequency for the existing channels.

"The spawning success of westslope cutthroat and Dolly Varden could be nearly eliminated from the North Fork," Brown said. "The cumulative effect of past, present and future sales can be the Achilles tendon for trout by excessive siltation, scoured stream beds, timber removal too near creek banks and banks trampled by skidding operations."

He said the Fish and Game Department assumed that the Forest Service's hydrological report will include the combined effects of former cuts, plus that of projected sales in estimating the rate that flows will be increased and the extended duration of peak volumes for each stream.

"We would be interested in the criteria used to judge the extent of channel damage expected from various percentages of above normal highs, that is 110 per cent, 120 per cent, etc.," Brown said. "We are particularly concerned with the hydrologist's report on Whale Creek, Red Meadow Creek, Moose Creek, Hay Creek, Coal Creek and Big Creek."

Brown said the Fish and Game Department had "breathed a sigh of relief" when the Forest Service stressed quality land management on the Flathead Forest and said that all resource aspects of forest lands would be given equal consideration.

"However, we have become alarmed by the size and number of continued timber sales we have reviewed and are reviewing on many North Fork streams," Brown said. "Lookout Creek sale, Elelehum Creek sale, Hornet-Lodgepole sale, Tepee Creek sale, the proposed Akinkoka Ridge sale, and Coal Lookout sale are some of the large sales recently sold or being readied for sale this year."

Edsel L. Corpe, supervisor of the Flathead National Forest, said in a response to Brown that the concerns of the two agencies "are nearly identical."

Corpe provided The Missoulian with a detailed response he sent to Brown in answer to the Fish and Game director's comments, which Corpe said were "timely and constructive."

"The Whale Creek hydrologic analysis indicated there were adverse watershed and fisheries impacts because of too much vegetative manipulation," Corpe said. "Accordingly a decision was made to reduce the volume of the proposed Akinkoka sale from 15 million board feet to about two million board feet."

Corpe said this was done even though a considerable amount of money had been spent in preparation of the

sale and "that the local economy would be dealt a considerable setback." He said the two million board feet now to be cut in the sale is predominantly salvage material that would, if not cut, soon die and fall.

The Flathead Forest supervisor said in response to previous cutting that the question of whether the reasons for cutting were valid or not was unimportant in light of growing concern for resource values other than timber.

"The important thing now is, what is presently being done, and what is planned for the future to avoid damage to stream beds and channels and to protect fish habitat," Corpe said.

He said the Forest Service proceeded with the Hornet-Lodgepole sale because it is on south-facing slopes which, according to the hydrological analysis, will not add to channel problems.

In fact, Corpe said that the effects of cutting on the Hornet-Lodgepole sale should be beneficial by distributing runoff across a longer time span and lowering peak flow, which he said is the most damaging factor of accelerated runoff.

Corpe said the sale on Koopee Creek, a tributary of Whale Creek, is similar to the Hornet-Lodgepole sale in that cutting will be on slopes predominantly south facing.

"However, in light of the hydrologic analysis of Whale Creek, this sale has been reduced in volume from 14 million board feet to four million," Corpe said.

Corpe said that the other sales mentioned by Brown were sold before the hydrologic analyses were initiated and before this impact was fully appreciated.

"These, too, will be subject to revision if we determine that unacceptable damage will result from the logging as planned and under contract," Corpe said.

Corpe said that last November the Flathead's engineer and program coordinator had met with Henry Hays, ranger of the Glacier View District, to discuss roads, timber sales and associated hydrological impacts on the North Fork.

"At that time they recommended a moratorium on major sales preparation and road survey and design until hydrologic analyses could be made for each major drainage on the west side of the North Fork," Corpe said. "I approved that recommendation."

Hays, who since has transferred from the Flathead to the Tongass National Forest in Alaska, told The Missoulian, that the situation in Whale Creek is similar to that in other drainages in the North Fork area.

"We've already cut the bottoms and as we move up on the side slopes we have to get hydrological studies to know if we can even cut," Hays said. "It is an unknown yet in terms of determining our allowable cut."

Both Hays and Corpe said the hydrological impacts in the North Fork drainage have been a combined result of combinations of timber cutting, fires, blowdown, and insect infestations which have removed vegetative cover and resulted in damaging stream flows.

Hays said that most of the areas would not be clearcut if the agency "had it to do over again."

"When these clearcuts were made the push was on getting timber out. That was the ball game," Hays said, "and it's going to be a real crunch to make the switch from clearcutting to a quality cutting program."

Hays said that it's likely that the allowable cut on the Glacier View District will be reduced by as much as 50 per cent to bring the district's operation into line with over-all forest direction.

"Our biggest problem is the lack of staff to gather data six to seven years in advance so we can do the planning on the district," Hays said. "The five-year plan has always been the king pin. You'd sit down for a week and toss it together in a week pretty much by guess and hope you came out all right. We need to get the tools to do an adequate inventory and planning to give the districts lead time to do the job properly."

Corpe said that the district rangers, their staffs and the entire forest is committed to the Flathead Forest Multiple-Use Plan in which they are required to supply a balanced mix of resources from national forest lands.

"I can't make important decisions which affect this resource mix without solid information on land capability and the consequences of alternate courses of management," Corpe said. "In the North Fork we are presently developing this information."

Corpe said that facts are much more important than educated guesses regardless of which agency supplies them and that he intends to rely more on facts and less on estimation.

"When we have facts and develop alternatives, utilizing input from the various publics and interested agencies, we will do our level best to select the alternative which protects the land and provides the best mix of resource use," Corpe said.